



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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Monroe Cheese-Maker Wins Wisconsin's SBA 2008 Family-Owned Small Business Award

Monroe: Buholzer brothers Ron, Steve and Dave, the Klondike Cheese Company team, are SBA's Wisconsin and Region V 2008 Butland Family Owned Small Business award winners. They were honored at SBA/SCORE's 23rd Annual Small Business Awards Breakfast at the Country Springs Hotel in Pewaukee on Friday, June 6, 2008.

Klondike Cheese Company manufactures some of the finest cheese in the country and is a third generation family owned and operated business that has been manufacturing cheese since 1925. The fourth generation is currently working in the business and a management succession plan is in place.

Seventy-five percent of Klondike's cheese output is Feta cheese. Feta is a Greek-style cheese, originally made from goat's or sheep's milk and now made from cow's milk with an enzyme added to attain the desired tangy taste. Klondike also manufactures brick, havarti and muenster cheeses. Klondike presently markets around 25 million pounds of cheese annually. To turn out this volume of cheese; Klondike buys 340,000 pounds of milk daily from its 80 to 85 family owned farms.

In 1946, the factory was taking in about 8,000 pounds of milk, based on the recollection that one kettle of Swiss production held roughly 2,000 pounds of milk. Klondike has come a long way from the copper kettle to a vast factory that is high-tech all the way with a computer-driven, fully automated coagulator and other equipment needed to produce Feta. The coagulator takes most of the brute work out of the process.

Klondike always buys locally whenever possible to support the local economy and other small family owned businesses in the community. They work in cooperation with other cheese companies in Wisconsin to strengthen the Wisconsin cheese industry.

As SBA's Butland Family Owned Small Business award winners, the Buholzer brothers were judged on their success as measured by sales and profits, increased employment opportunities for family members and non-family members for the business, demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth and voluntary efforts to strengthen family-owned businesses within the community.

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The end product is what is important to the Buholzers. Making cheese, even with the automated equipment, is still an art. It's not something you can learn out of a book. It takes years and years of doing. Experience gives you the feel for what is going to happen, what needs to happen and how to adjust for different conditions.

SBA is extremely proud to have chosen the Klondike Cheese management team as this year's winner. We look forward to watching them grow and prosper to feed the many cheese lovers in Wisconsin.

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